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THE EXCAVATION OF AN INDIAN VILLAGE ON THE YADKIN RIVER NEAR TRADING FORD

CHARLES D. HOWELL¹ AND DONALD C. DEARBORN

In 1939 Vance Eller, of Salisbury, North Carolina, discovered a location containing an unusual quantity of buried Indian artifacts. On October 5, 1946, he led a group of men to the site, and observations and excavations were begun under the influence and guidance of Geiger Omwake of Lewes, Delaware.

This site is located about a mile below Dukeville and opposite the mouth of Swearing Creek where it enters the Yadkin. Before the construction of High Rock Dam, the site was on the west bank of the Yadkin. Since the construction of the dam it has been covered with water. However, occasionally, when the water level is low the site appears as an island, and if the level of the water recedes sufficiently, then, as an extension of the west bank of High Rock Lake.

The workers reached the "Island" in October, 1946, by wading through water over their knees, but by December they could reach it on foot without getting more than a trace of mud on the soles of their shoes.

The site can be located on the "Island" by its position bordering a row of large stumps (Fig. 1) lying just northeast of it. Northeast beyond these stumps is an inaccessible mud flat extending to the river, which may be 100 or 150 yards away when the site is dry enough to work on.

In 1946 a long period of low water made it possible to work at the site from October 5th until the end of the year. Most of the material studied was collected at that time by groups of men varying in number from two to fifteen. The groups included students and faculty members of Catawba College, students from Duke University, and townspeople from Salisbury, North Carolina.

Two years elapsed before the site was again accessible. Then on October 12, 1948, the first of a series of four trips was made by groups of Catawba faculty and students. Rain and high water brought an end to this work before the end of October.

The site has not been above water since that date. It was decided, therefore, to assemble the material obtained and to

1. Dr. Howell is now at Muskingum College, New Concord, Ohio.

make a permanent record of the work done with such conclusions as could be derived from it.

The nucleus of the workers consisted of the authors and Geiger Omwake of Lewes, Delaware; Dr. Bruce Wentz, Dean John Bass, and Prof. Lionel Whiston of Catawba College; Niel Williams and Julian Wilbur, of Salisbury; and Vance Eller of Granite Quarry. All materials discussed in this paper were stored and catalogued by the authors. Some other materials in the hands of other workers could not be assembled in time for this report.

The area excavated up to this time covers about 4,700 square feet. The shape of the area can be seen on the map, Figure 1. The site was marked off into convenient sections as shown on the map. Most of the sections were about nine feet square. Their corners were marked off by stakes, and each square was designated by the number on the stake in its upper left (South) corner.

The attempt to keep all objects from a single square together was roughly successful, although some mixture of potsherds occurred at times.

The site was surveyed, the plots were laid out, and the important features were mapped by Donald Dearborn.

THE OCCUPATIONAL LAYER

Plate I is a photograph of a typical working profile. It shows about three inches of grayish surface sand at "a". Beneath it, "b", is a layer of blackened sand, the occupational layer. All artifacts recovered were found in this layer. Below the occupational layer is a deep bed of yellowish sand, "c", extending below the water table.

A preliminary study of the soil relations was made by Charles Howell to reach a better understanding of the history of the site, and to disclose its total extent. The study was brought to a termination before the second objective was achieved. The results obtained are illustrated in the diagram, Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows a profile study of the soil down to approximately 30 inches, and extending for 54 feet from A to G. The exact line of this profile is shown on the map, Figure 1, by a cross-hatched line, A-G. This line runs roughly southwest in a straight line.

From this figure it can be seen that the portion of the occupational layer between A and D shows signs of washing. Between A and B there is no occupational layer, but only mud containing sticks, modern glass, tin, and Indian potsherds. The occupational layer first appears at B, and gradually increases in thickness inland. It seems safe to conclude that the Indian site originally extended further to the east than point B. This is borne out by observations of Vance Eller that when he first found the pottery in his vicinity, the row of tree stumps now along the baseline of the map (Fig. 1) were then on the top of the bank of the Yadkin above (to the west of the region in which he found potsherds).

Between D and E the occupational layer shows its greatest depth, ten inches. The shallowness between F and G has not been explained. It may mark a "thinning" of the layer on the fringe of the village, or the results of plowing off the top of the occupational layer. It is known that this site was used as a cornfield at one time. Further studies should be made to see if Indian artifacts can be found in the gray sand covering the occupational layer. None were found in these preliminary diggings.

The disturbed earth under G is of recent origin. It represents a pit dug down from the gray sand through the occupational layer into the yellow sand below. It has since been covered over by silt, deposited since the High Rock Dam was constructed.

A note on the top-covering should be made. From B to E the gray top sand is covered only intermittently by thin patches of red clay. Just beyond E the clay covering becomes consistent and increases in thickness to about three inches in spots between E and G. This represents deposits of the Yadkin since High Rock Dam was constructed. It is thinner east of E probably due to washing by the current there when the river gets low.

It should be noted that the mud covering the island is a foot thick (or more) on the west side of the island. What has happened to the Indian site, if it extended that far, still remains to be determined. It is hoped that studies will be made of the soil profile to determine the original boundaries of the site.

THE EXCAVATION

The earliest excavations were made at random spots on the site. Following the first day's explorations, the excavations were

organized and a number of pits were dug simultaneously. These were then joined up laterally into a long trench running roughly from northwest to southeast. The trench was maintained about waist high, unless pits or disturbed earth were found to go deeper.

The deepest pit, Number 32, was 108 inches deep from the present soil surface, and 72 inches in diameter.

Types of Pits.—Sixty-one pits were recorded. The simplest pit was apparently a fire bed, of which 15 were recorded. These had charcoal filled bottoms, and contained little cultural material. Pits called "Disturbed Earth" on the map, were much larger and also contained little or no cultural material. The so-called "fire pits" were variable in size, larger than the simple fire beds. They contained proportionally less charcoal than fire beds, or none at all, but were marked by the presence of numerous fire stones and other artifacts such as pottery, bone, and stone.

Refuse pits contained fire materials to a minor extent or none at all. They held large quantities of bone, shell, flint, chips, pottery, and stone artifacts. If they contained chiefly mussel shells they were called "Shell Pits." Some of these were packed solidly with shell remains, and in that case usually had few cultural materials in them.

In all likelihood many small pits and firebeds were ignored by workers and so were not recorded. Forty-seven pits other than fire beds were recorded.

Post molds.—Forty-six post molds have been located. They extend for varying depths below the cultural level, and varied in diameter from two inches to three and a half inches. All were recorded on the map, but so far no certain pattern has been worked out from them to indicate buildings or palisades.

Arrowheads.—Four hundred and forty-six points have been counted. All but five of these are triangular, the so-called "bird points" common in river front remains. The remaining five were stemmed points (Plate IIa, nos. 1-4). One of the stemmed points may have been three or four inches long. One other object found might be classified as a point. It is a pointed chert fragment (Plate IIIa, e) that may have been originally five or six inches long.

All of the triangular arrowheads, which means practically

all the points found, are small. The longest of these measures two and a quarter inches long and the widest is one inch. Only 40 of the 446 points found are perfect. Forty others are slightly chipped, but the remaining 336 are only fragments.

Other stone implements.—Forty-nine chipped celts were found. All are chert, and the largest is seven and three quarters inches long, by three and one quarter inches wide. The smallest celt-like object is four inches long and just under two inches wide. No smooth-finished celts or chisels were found. Five samples of celts are shown in Plate IIIa, h-1.

Twelve abrading stones were found. These were made of a sandy mica-bearing stone, and several have well-formed grooves on them (Plate IIIa,d). Beside this, in Plate IIIa, are seen three of the four polishing stones found. These are made of a siliceous stone and have marks of abrasion on them.

Eighteen chert scrapers were found (Plate IIb, d). Twenty-four stone drill or awls were also found (Plate IIb, rows a and b). All were made of chert.

Four stones with holes bored in them were unearthed. They are shown in Plate IIb, c, 1-4. Numbers 2 and 3 are flat, with the hole in such a position as to suggest that they were used as pendants. Number 2 is made of soft shale, and has markings scratched on it. On one side, the scratchings radiate roughly from the hole, and on the other side they are vertical. Criss-cross marks of lighter cut are also visible, but no pattern can be made out. The tip of the pendant contains four notches incised in it.

Number 3 is made of a hard stone, and is only a fragment. It is estimated to have been about three and three quarters inches long originally.

Numbers 1 and 4 are not pierced like typical pendants. Number 1 has a hole in the center of it. It is roughly spherical as is Number 4. The latter has three holes in it, all visible in Plate IIb. The three holes all meet within the stone.

Two fragments were found that appear to be grinding ends of chert pestles. They are shown in Plate IIIa, f and g. Each is roughly cylindrical, and about one and a half inches across at its greatest diameter. Another smaller pestle-like object was found. It is made of a mica-bearing stone, and is about three and

a half inches long and three quarters of an inch in diameter. Its cross section would give a four-sided figure with rounded corners. One end is rounded and smooth.

Eighteen stones classified as hammerstones were recorded. A selection is shown in Plate IIIb, a, b, c, e, and f. One of the 18 (c) is not pitted, but has one end worn almost flat. The others all had at least one pit. Some have two, and one (e) had four pits. One (f) had two definite pits and the beginnings of a third on one of its flattish sides.

The four-pitted hammerstone (e) was found in a unique position. When unearthed it was lying in a concavity of the large lapstone figured next to it (Plate IIIb, d).

Two huge workstones were classified as lapstones. The one already referred to and shown in Plate IIIb, d, is nine inches across its longest axis, six inches across the shorter side, and three and one half inches thick. It has a concavity on each of its two major faces and so is biconcave. The other lapstone is larger, although only a fragment split through the centers of the concavities was found. It measures ten and one-half inches in diameter along its broken surface, four inches in thickness, and is biconcave.

Bone tools.—Animal bones and bone tools are illustrated in Plate IV a and b. Plate IV b, r and s are two antler tools possibly used in flaking flints. Plate IVa, c-g are very precisely cut bone fragments. One end is cut neatly—whether in process of preparing the limb for eating or by design is unknown.

A total of nine bone awls were found, comprising two types of awl. One type (Plate IVb, h, i, j) is made of a bone splinter tapered gradually to a fine point. The second type of awl (Plate IVb, o and p) is made from the elbow of a deer. The elbow process (olecranon) serves as a convenient handle, and a short piece of the shaft of the bone is tapered to a useful point. The points are broken in both specimens shown.

Pottery.—No whole pots or urns were found. Pottery counted to date includes 6,892 sherds of one inch square or larger. This includes 717 rim sherds, from which it is estimated that 200 different pots are represented. Samplings of the sherds are shown in Plates V and VI.

Almost all sherds are of the same material, a reddish-yellow

clay tempered with sand and grit. Some pieces show traces of mica. In some cases a sufficient number of sherds have been fitted together to give an indication of the size of the pot, and even to reconstruct them. Sizes of pots thus obtained vary in diameter from three inches to twelve inches at the rim.

Bottoms are somewhat intermediate between round and true pointed bottoms (Plate VIb, A, B, C, D). Several "killed" bottoms have been found. Necks of pots are somewhat constricted, and in a few cases the rims are flared.

A number of pots were obviously constructed by the coil process with the fractures showing the coil outline. In other cases, evidences of coils have not been detected. No conclusion, of course, can be drawn from this, but the possibility is at least suggested that some other process, such as molding in a basketry support, may have been utilized.

About one third of the pots represented are marked with an all-over basketry or textile pattern. Another third are cord-marked over the entire surface. The remainder are smooth, many of them showing evidences of scraping or smoothing with an instrument. About half of the rim pieces have indentations, incised marks, or other decoration on the edge.

Decoration on the pots is crude in design and execution and in almost no case extends below the shoulder of the pot. Horizontal lines are frequent, and diagonal or chevron markings are fairly common. A few pieces bear a punctate design such as might be made by a hollow reed. Not more than a dozen pieces bear any design using circular marks, and all of these may have come from one pot. A few pieces bear a bead laid on just below or at the rim, but these are infrequent. A few pieces with a stamped design have been found.

Sherds from rather widely separated pits and from various depths have been found to fit together. This is evidence that the artifacts are the product of a single occupation.

Geiger Omwake succeeded in reconstructing two large pots (Plate VII). Each is about 12 inches in diameter at the rim and 15 inches high. Plaster was used to fill in the spaces for which no sherds could be found. Approximately two thirds of these pots were reconstructed using the original sherds, and one third of plaster.

Also, one tiny bowl, three inches in diameter, and one inch deep was reconstructed by Charles Howell.

Rather remarkable is the infrequent occurrence of clay pipes. Parts of only two pipes have been found (Plate IVa, a and b). One fragment, b, is that of a pipe bowl, and the other, a, is a part of the stem end of a pipe. These appear to be straight tubular pipes.

Burial.—One burial was discovered by John Bass. The skeleton was found in a flexed position facing east. Most of the bones were in a state of extreme fragility, and although their outlines were brought out by brushing the sand off them as they lay in the ground, they crumbled to pieces on being handled. On drying out, the surfaces warped and cracked, peeling off.

A few bones were recovered and reconstructed, with the aid of Duco cement, to the point of representing reasonably whole bones. These include the cranium, the mandible, the right femur, several cervical and lumbar vertebrae, a number of finger bones, and the right first rib.

Although the skull warped and peeled badly as it dried, it was finally reconstructed by Charles Howell. The skeleton is believed to be that of a mature female.

CONCLUSIONS

Evidence was sought for the type of dwelling used by the Indians. The 46 post molds found were all vertical, but their distribution led to no conclusion as to shape or arrangement of dwellings or walls. That the occupation was of long duration is shown by the depths of the occupational layer, which was between 8 and 10 inches in the least disturbed regions. From this, at least, it is concluded that the area marks the site of a village.

On reaching this conclusion the question was at once raised as to whether this could be the Saponi Village cited by Lawson in his *History of North Carolina*. The Saponi, which he visited in 1701 along the Yadkin, were known to have been in contact with white men since at least 1670, when Lederer contacted them in Virginia. They would be expected to have had in their possession some durable European goods by 1701. All of our helpers were instructed in the importance of looking for glass beads, rusty nails, and European crockery. However, no such materials

were discovered. So we concluded that this site antedated the contact with White men, and was occupied and abandoned before 1700—before the Saponi were in this region.

A number of the members of the North Carolina Archaeological Society examined the artifacts found on this site and compared them with materials with which they were familiar along the Yadkin. The certain identification of them was made by Joffre Coe to whom we are grateful for the benefit of his judgment based on extensive studies of stratified findings along the Yadkin. He examined a sampling of typical artifacts displayed at the 1948 convention of the North Carolina Academy of Science. He identified the collection as materials characteristic of the Uwharrie Culture, which dates from about 1300 to 1500 A.D.

An attempt has been made to draw other conclusions from the observations. At first we sought some information by means of which the depth of the occupational layer might be translated into duration of occupation of the region. We are still seeking a means of interpreting this.

Next we sought to make an interpretation based on the area studied and the amount of pottery found. We found approximately 200 different pots among the sherds found in 4,700 square feet uncovered. Our interpretation can deal only with this 4,700 square feet, which may be only a peripheral area of the original village. Due to scattering of potsherds any observed area would contain remnants of more pots than had belonged to inhabitants directly over that area. Let us assume that 150 pots is a corrected figure for the number of these pots used by occupants of the area.

A second assumption is that an average of 30 Indians dwelt in this area over the period of occupation. For purposes of family grouping, feeding, etc., let us assume, third, that this constituted five groups of six Indians each.

Now, how many pots might be broken in such groups per year? Let us make two extreme assumptions (at least we imagine them to be extreme): one that each group broke one pot a month, 12 a year, and thus the whole area would be littered with 60 pots a year; the second, that each group broke only four pots a year, making a total of 20 pots broken a year. In the first instance it would take two and a half years to break the 150 pots, and in the second it would take seven and a half years.

We have then two extreme figures, two and a half and seven

and a half years, with five years as a median figure for the duration of this occupation. It would be of interest to have this debated by archaeologists with more information at their disposal.

It was hoped that somewhere on the site evidence of two or more occupations might be found in two different strata. This still might be found. The total area of the village has not been exploited by any means. The site is known to be at least one quarter of a mile long, and possibly more. At its extremities it may reveal things not found in the area exploited.

SUMMARY

This site in Rowan County is located near Trading Ford and is now on the floor of High Rock Lake. It is a site of an Indian village. The inhabitants had had no contact with white men. Their cultural remains are of the Uwharrie type, dating between 1300-1500 A.D. The area excavated on the site covers 4700 square feet of a site **at least** a quarter of a mile long. 200 different pots are believed to be represented by the potsherds found. Among the pottery are tubular pottery pipes. Bone awls and tools are found. Stone implements are crude-chipped. No polished or sculptured stone material is present. The pottery data have been used to speculate on the duration of the occupation, which is put at five years, with a possible minimum of two and a half and a possible maximum of seven and a half years.

Catawba College
Salisbury, North Carolina

Figure 1

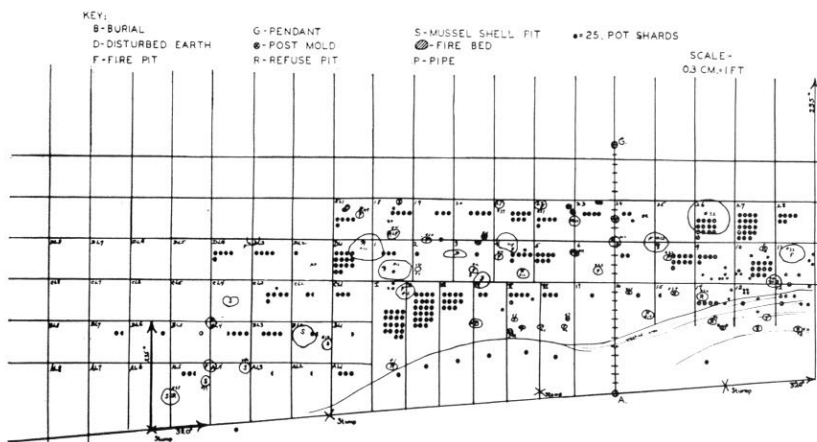


Fig. 1. Chart showing the location of pits, post molds, and the distribution of pottery. One black dot indicates 25 potsherds.

Figure 2

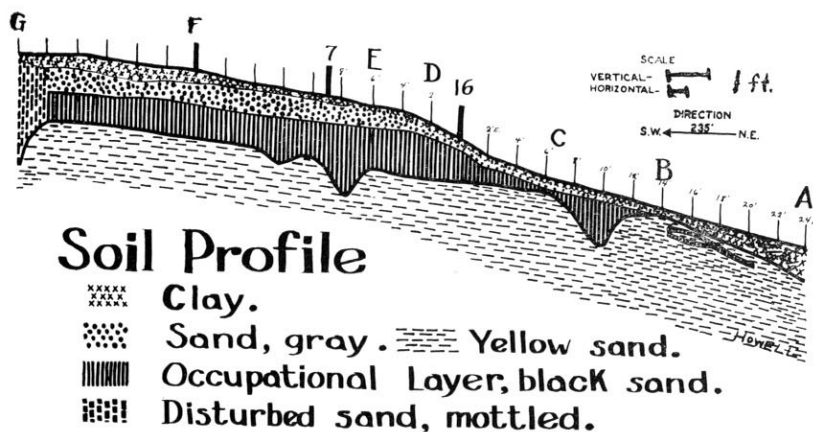
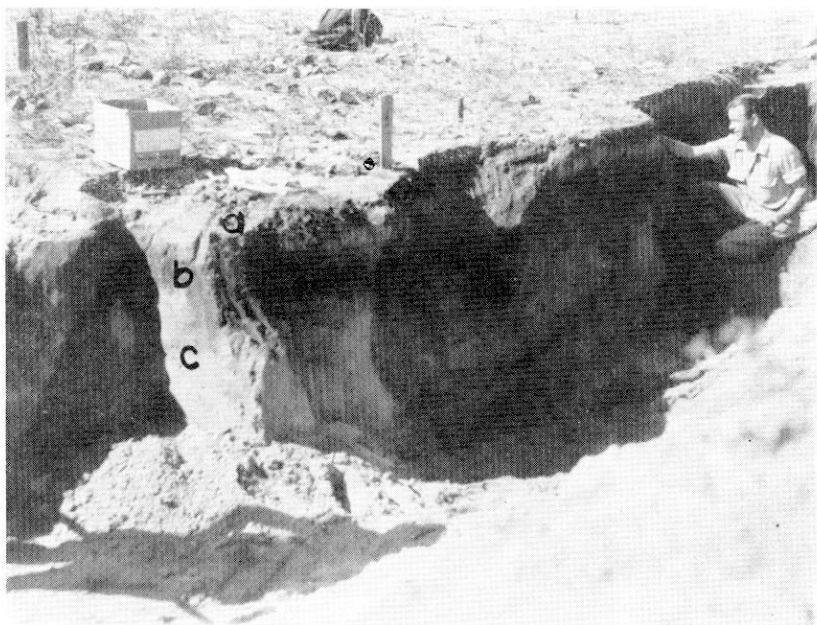


Fig. 2. Diagram of the 54 foot soil profile taken along the line A-G shown in Figure 1.

Plate I



Photograph showing a typical soil profile. a. Gray sand covering occupational layer. b. Blackened sand of the occupational layer. c. Yellowish sand below the occupational layer. This layer extends below the water level.

Plate II

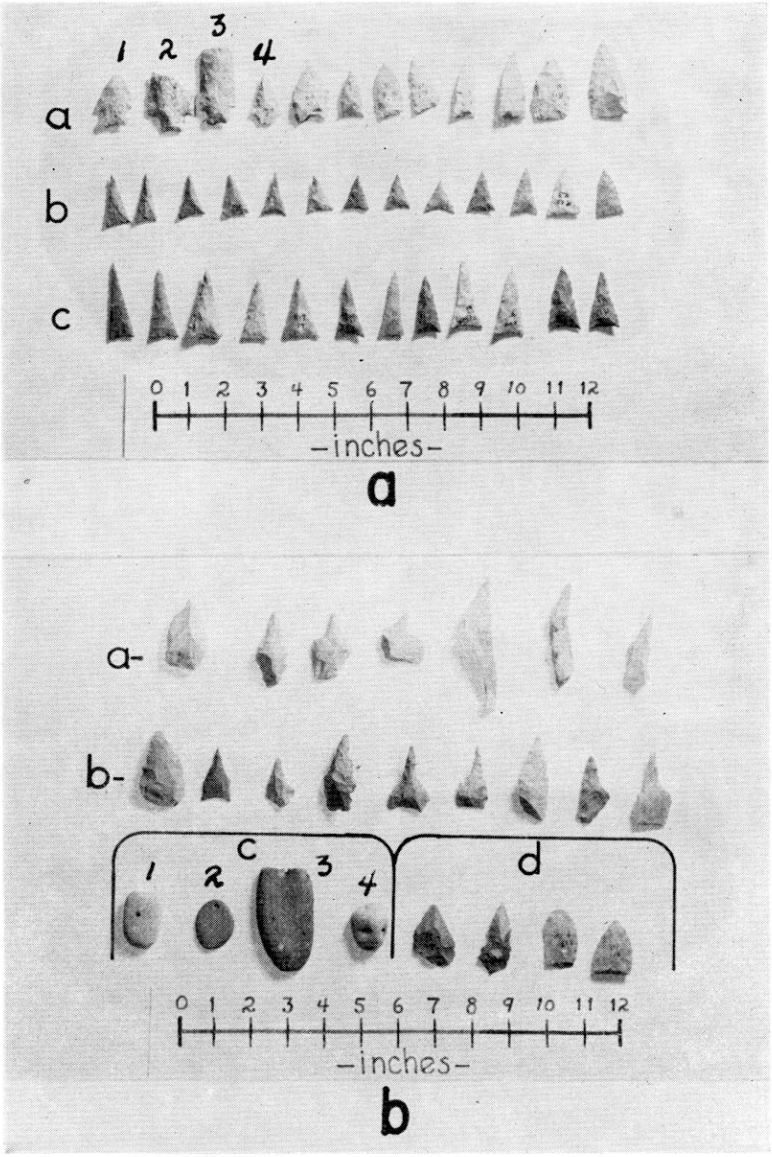


Plate III

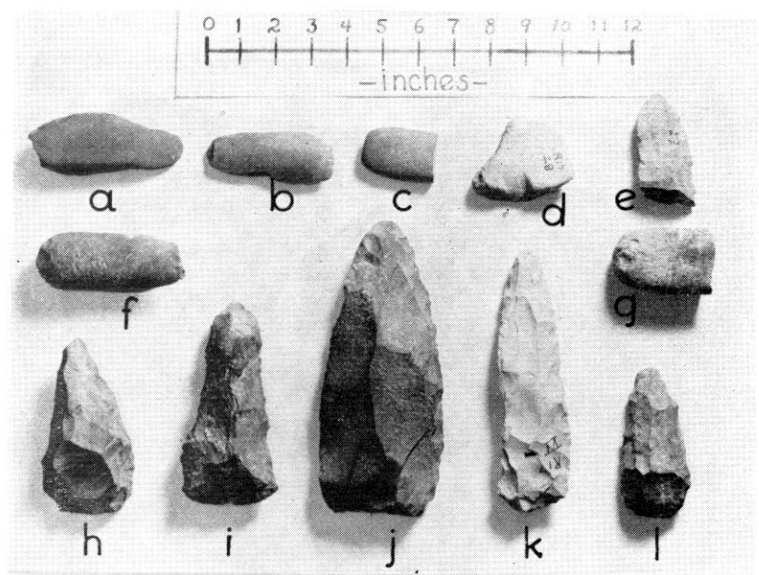
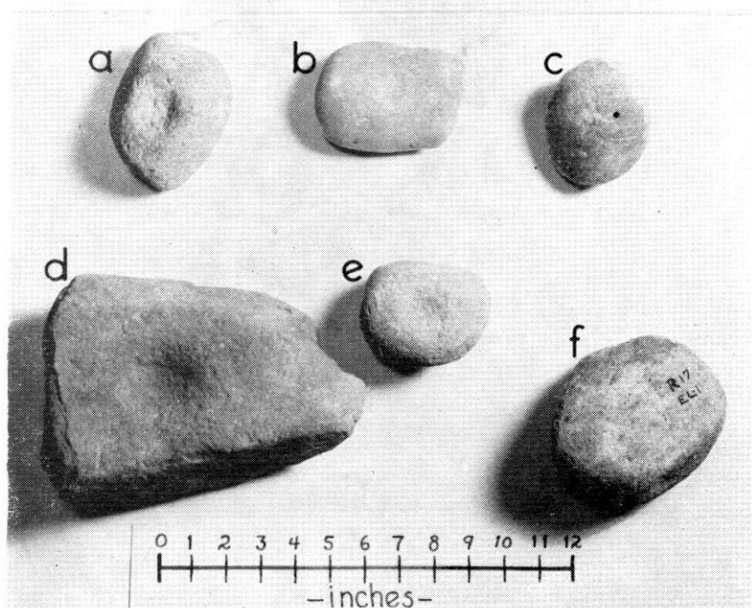
**a****b**

Plate IV

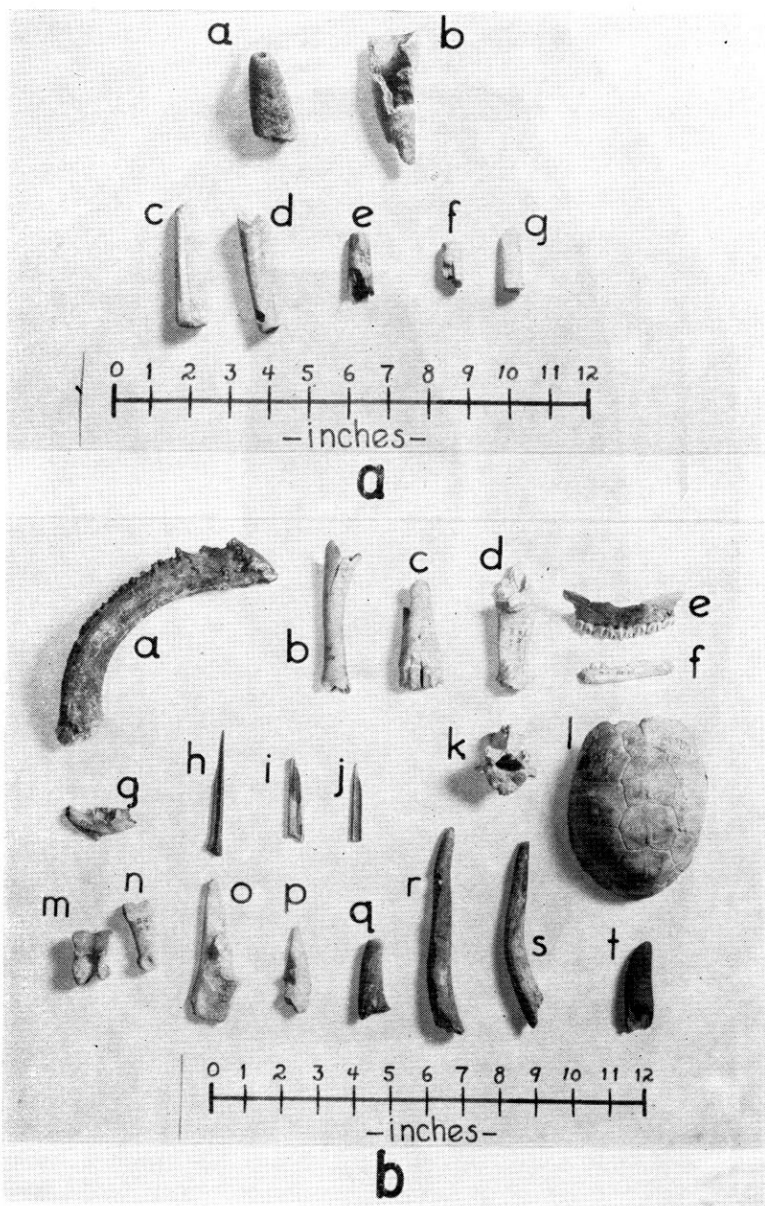


Plate V

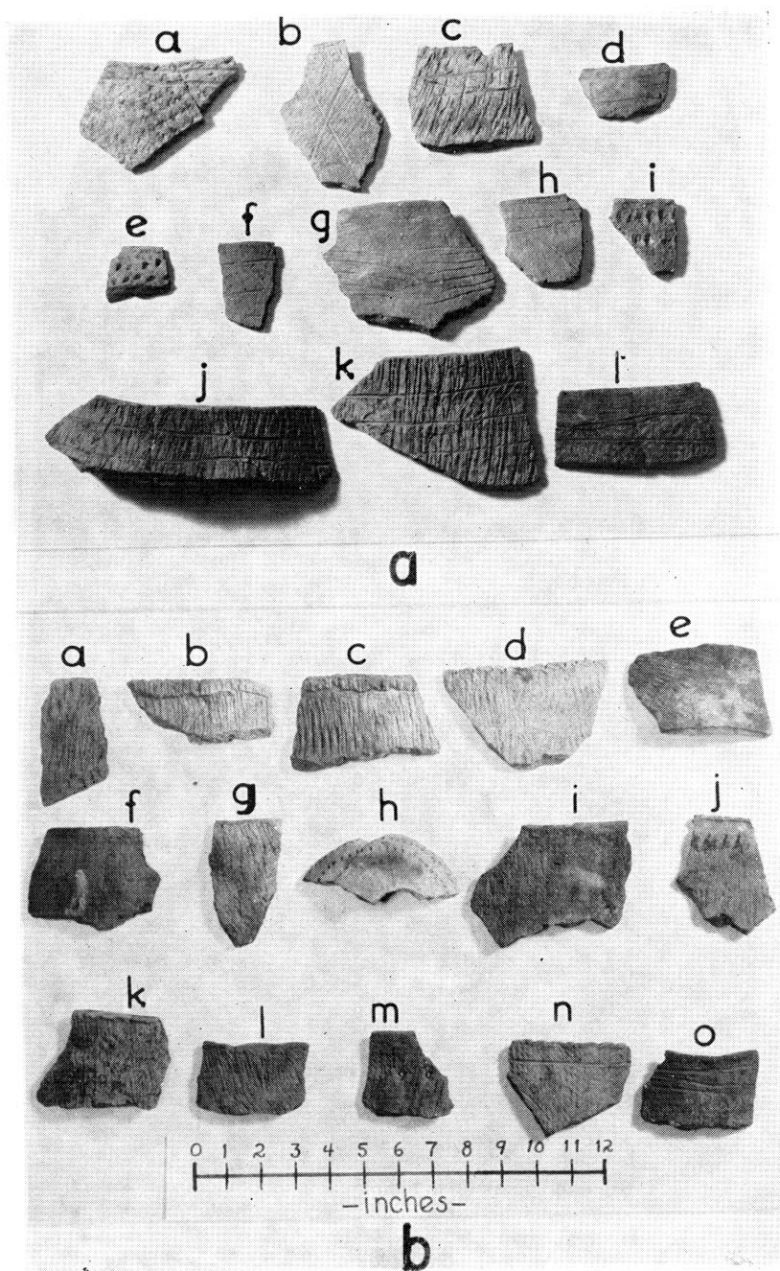


Plate VI

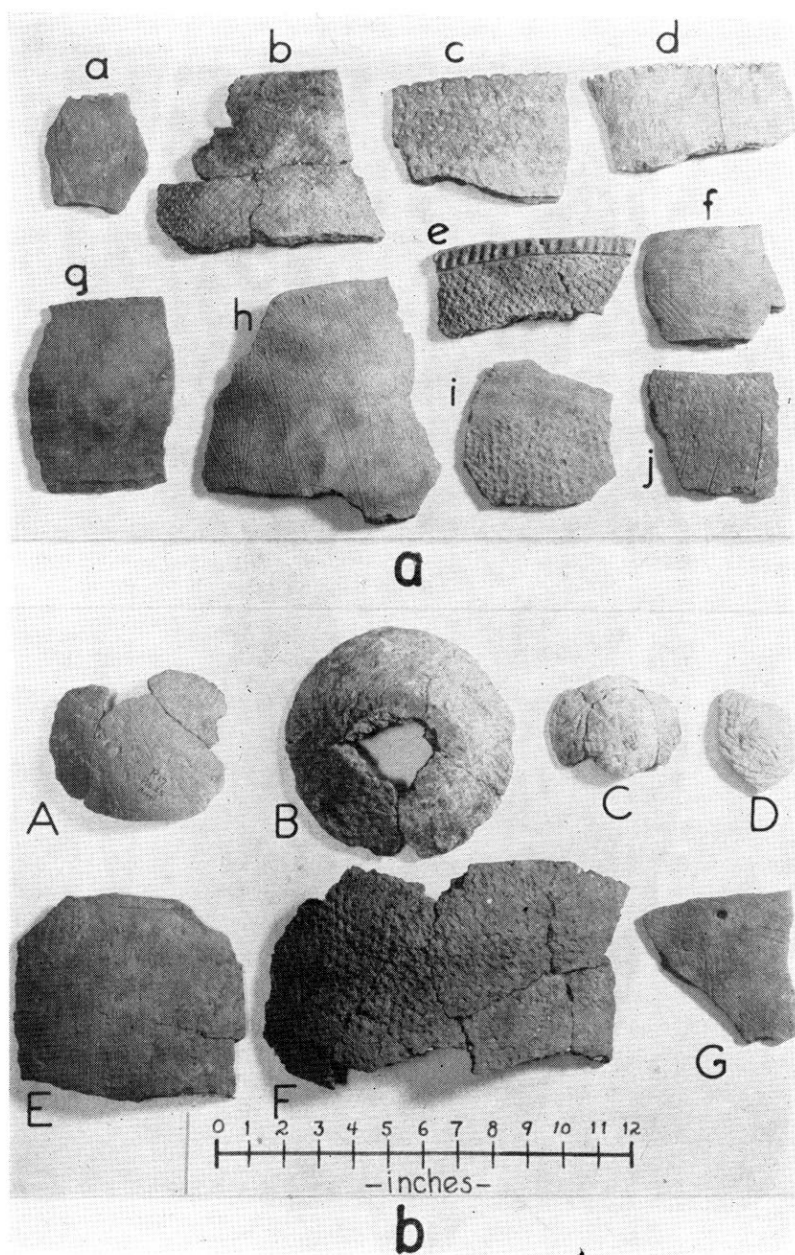
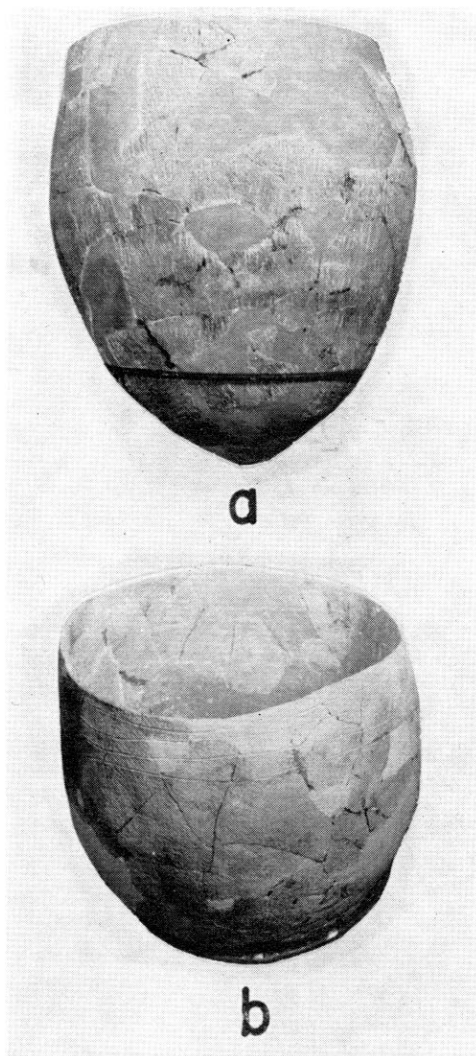


Plate VII



Two pots restored by Geiger Omwake. a. Cordmarked surface finish. b. Net-impressed surface finish. Both pots measure approximately 12 inches in diameter and 15 inches high.

THE SACRED FIRE OF THE CHEROKEES

D. H. CORKRAN

The "town house" or "temple" fire occupied a "sacred" position among the Cherokees. In the dusky, pillared vault of the great meeting house it was the center. Round it on occasion sat in due order the headmen of town or region deliberating in solemn oration affairs of moment while banked behind them in the shadows arced rows of intent listeners. Round it, too, wove the solemnity of the ceremonial dances, and the frenzy of the war dance. This centrality of the fire to the physical, social, and political needs of the nation was reenforced and symbolized in the spiritual nature attributed to it.

That the Cherokees had a great reverence for fire is indicated in two eighteenth century manuscripts which record observations made among the Overhills at least forty years apart. The earlier manuscript is that of Alexander Long, trader and periodic resident among the Overhills 1711-1725;¹ the later is that of William Richardson, missionary to the Cherokees during the winter of 1758-59².

Richardson, as one interested in the spiritual welfare of man, made note of whatever evidence he saw of a religion among the Cherokees. On January 19th, 1759 he observed what he took to be a form of fire worship: "At Chotte they had a great dance tonight, which I took for some religious ceremony paid to the fire as they frequently bowed to it."³ Curious, Richardson made inquiry. Apparently he did not ask the right person; for the answer he received, though it may have been the correct one, sounds suspiciously like the usual Indian refusal to talk about "sacred" things. Richardson writes that he "was afterward informed by them it was a custom they had" and he added "and they don't seem to worship anything. . . ."⁴

1. Alexander Longe, "A Small Postscript of the ways and maners of the nashon of indians called Cherikees . . . this smaller peace was writ by one who write the journal of 74 pages." Papers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Photostat. Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

2. William Richardson, "A Report in Diary form to Reverend Samuel Davies of Newcastle, Hanover County, Virginia, Secretary of the Society for Managing the Mission and Schools among the Indians, October 2, 1758 through March 17, 1759." Original in manuscript Division of the Library of the City of New York, 36 pages. Photostat in William R. Davie Papers, II, 1758-1852, Southern Historical Collections, Library of the University of North Carolina.

3. *Ibid.*, January 19th, 1759.

4. *Ibid.*, January 17th, 1759.

One day an Indian youth made some halting revelations that suggested to the missionary he might have come to a wrong conclusion. The boy "talked about the fire, some talked to it and it to their father above, others to ye water, and it to their father above, making ym mediators as I thought."⁵ Omitting speculation on "their great father above," the foregoing statement in the light of James Mooney's study of the Cherokee River Cult⁶ implies the existence of a fire cult. It is to be regretted that the earnest missionary did not give a complete account of what the pagan boy said about fire and water.

Though he leaves us pretty much in the dark about this form of worship, Richardson makes one more reference to it in his journal. On the 27th of January, 1759, he discussed it with no less a personage than the "Prince" of Chotte: "Talked about half an hour to ye Prince of Chotte concerning some dances which appeared like religious ceremonies paid to the fire by their turning towards it and singing and calling it their grandfather,⁷ as for their calling it so it was from the advantages they received from it in this cold weather and so ye water."⁸

Richardson's testimony can be reduced to these points: the Cherokees had dances in which reverence was paid to the fire; fire was held to be at least equal in mystical potency to water; fire had a spirit; the spirit of fire was a giver of good things; fire bore prayers "to the great man above."

Much of the foregoing is reenforced by the observations of Alexander Long made between 1711 and 1725. Though Long makes no reference to fire in dances, his testimony is explicit and detailed about other phases of fire reverence. His first mention of the fire is as eternal—that in the Cherokee "temple" or town house "a round hearth in the middle of the house" contains a fire "which never goes out."⁹ This temple fire had a character quite apart from that of common fire. No one was allowed to take any part of it from the building. One day Long, having lit his pipe at the temple fire, was walking out of the structure, when one of the Indians snatched it from him and emptied it

5. *Ibid.*, January 24th, 1759.

6. James Mooney, "The River Cult of the Cherokees," *The Journal of American Folklore*, XIII, 1918, pp. 1-10.

7. At the Qualla Reservation, fire is sometimes referred to as an old woman (especially in the formulas). It is also referred to as mother's father's father, but not as grandfather (ed.).

8. Richardson, *op.cit.*, January 27th, 1759.

9. Longe, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

before returning it to him. Reports Long: "the prest had given orders to teake the pipe out of my mouth and put out the fire and delivered me the pipe again and prayed me not to be angry for they dreaded letting the fire that belonged to the temple . . . to be kared abrod like common fire and that the grat god did nott permitt to karrie aney thing that was sett aparte for him abrod and be mixed with common fire. . . ."10

A taboo also attached to the ashes of the sacred fire. Long relates that "they will not suffer the ashes that's taken off the altar to be kard out the temple only once a year and then the prest ofers meate oferings mead by firs and those that is apoynted to karrie out the ashes must fast and drink physic two days and ther is a place apoynted close by the temple to put the ashes// the place is called 'skeona'¹¹ being interpreted the spirite or place of sparets there will nobody young or ould aproch that place but them that are apoynted to goe there if the chilldrin goes there as they doe sometimes the prest sends for them and has them scratcht al over thire bodeye. . . ."12

The statement that "the grate god did not permit to karrie aneything that was sett apart for him abrod" suggests that the temple fire acquired its sacredness as apparatus in the service of a high deity. In the sense that fire was mediator, as described by Richardson, this was true, and Long adds substantiation. He reports that when on certain occasion the priest or shaman ordered a deer to be killed "for the town" none of the meat could be eaten till there had been sacrifice made to the fire and to the four winds: "This deare flesh is never eate by aneybody till the prest cutts a piece of itt and throws itt in the midst of the fire."¹³ Then follows the sacrifice to the four winds after which "they teakes all the rest of the meate and meakes it pass thru the flame of the fire and then gives it to the women to dress for the prests and all others that pleases to eate of it. . . ."14 Not content to see the ceremony only, Long looks into the reason for it. "I asked the prest whie or wherefore he burned that peace of meate in the fire he tould me that itt was to the grate king above

10. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

11. *sKia*, a ghost or spirit, separate from the body (ed.)

12. Longe, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

and that itt was burnt in honor and obedunce to him being supreme lord and emperore of all veseble and oneveseble. . . ."¹⁵

Though the foregoing passage presents the temple fire in its function as mediator, it also carries a strong implication that the fire is a "spirit." This is suggested from the association of the fire with the four winds which according to Long's account were each in the hands of a special messenger of the great god for says he "this grate king as they call him, has foure meshengers that he has placed in the foure winds."¹⁶ In the ceremony described above each of the four winds had to be placated: "I asked him agane for what reasons doe you throw meate towards the 4 winds, he tould me that he never ofered them aney afering mead by fire but only geave it them raw . . . I asked him agane whie he gave them aney att all . . . because said he they have the charge of the foure winds and he that is in the north was given him meate because he should not lett the north wind run too longe to destroy us with could. . . ."¹⁷ In the instance of the winds the meat is offered for placatory purposes to spirits. That the fire too was a spirit is clear in the treatment outlined above of its ashes.

As mediator or as spirit or as both the temple fire figures in the feast of the green corn. Long gives a vivid picture of the sacrifice in the fire of the first fruits: "The ould proest sitts as modest and looks as serious as a judge till all is come into the house . . . then he goes to every sorte of vittals and teaks a letell out of every sorte and puts it in a new Erten pan pinted all reed . . . when soe doen he goes toward the fire with the pan in his hands and the white wing in his right hand and there stands and talks in a lingoe or gibrish that none can onderstand but himself for the space of one oure till the swet rones down of him like water and now and then houlding up his hand towards heaven and when ended he throws the vitells into the fire and stands there till it is all burned to ashes and ends. . . ."¹⁸

Beside the temple fire there was at least one other sacred fire. This was the war fire. According to Long, when the war party assembles "the war king meakes war fire by rubing two

15. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

sticks one against an other with ye quick motion thereof it sets the wood afire whereof they kindle thire warfire//when the four days are ended the war king teaks of the fire and puts it in a red clay pot and karries it to war with them. . . ."¹⁹ Once on the warpath the war king functions as a conjurer and the fire as a magic symbol: "in the path all the war king's care is to teake care that the fire never goes out if the war fire chance to goe out they will every soule of them return home and if they are just going to ingeage thire enemies and the fire goes out they all rome away but if the fire keeps in they pressed on thire journey and when they ingeage thire enemies and all the while they are ingeaged the war king sits him down and keps a blowing the fire that they will have the beter of thire enemies. . . ."²⁰ It is interesting to note in this connection that the color symbolic of success in Cherokee symbolism is the color of fire, red; that symbolic of failure and death, is the color of the charred remains of a dead fire, black.

For the war fire of a successful war party a high destiny awaited. The war party on its return had to purify itself and dispose of the magic fire. As recorded by Alexander Long the procedure was as follows: "the maner that they purifie themselves is one this waye they sit them down by the war fire and drinks fisick for 4 days the 4th day at night after the sone down they wash thire close and bodies in the water and cause all thire arms to pass throw the flame of the faire . . . when soe done the war king teakes some of the war fire and puts in his pott and goes one before them and they goe into the temple and the war king teakes the war fire that he has broght from war and throws itt in the temple fire. . . ."²¹ Thus the potent magic of a successful war fire added its strength to each town's temple fire.

Alexander Long's observations lend substance to Richardson's suggestion of the town house fire as being spirit and mediator. They add two other concepts. One, that fire is a purifier, affirms the likeness of its spirit entity to that of water. The other, that of the town house fire as the repository of war fire, suggests a principal origin of its potency. Immemorially old, undying, periodically strengthened by the magic of good omened

19. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

war fire, the town house fire flamed red speaking of powerful success. It was the center of strength. An Indian embarking upon a crucial enterprise, made a prayer or incantation to this "grandfather." The Cherokee people, ever mindful of their dependence upon this powerful spirit among them, danced around it in thanksgiving and propitiation. Its strong flame drove away the ghosts that lingered near weapons that had been dipped in enemy blood and cleansed of evil spirits the food chosen for ceremonial eating. Finally, its great power must be fed of the first fruits before ever the hungry people could eat of the new corn. In this latter act the Cherokees denoted the spirit of fire to be the first of spirits that lived among them. As such it was the one fittest to speak to whatever great "ouka" presided over the spirits—for an Indian knew he needed all the magic he could get on his side.

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NEW BOOKS WORTH READING

ARCHEOLOGY OF THE BYNUM MOUNDS, MISSISSIPPI. By John L. Cotter and John M. Corbett, with additions by Marshall T. Newman, Volney H. Jones, Henry W. Setzer, and J. P. E. Morrison. Archeological Research Series Number One. Washington: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1951. vi, 112 pages, 5 figures, 20 plates, 3 charts, and 26 tables. \$0.75.

This report is the first number of the Archeological Research Series of the National Park Service. The field work covered in this report was undertaken as part of the research along the Natchez Trace Parkway in the states of Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi. The report is a worthy introduction to any series. It is an exceedingly detailed report of the excavations at a single site with additional technical reports on physical anthropology by Marshall T. Newman, on ethnobotanical materials by Volney H. Jones, on animal remains by Henry W. Setzer, and on shells by J. P. E. Morrison. The data on the excavation are presented in a wealth of detail that at times seems almost out of proportion to the material recovered.

The Bynum site is located on the southern end of Pontotoc Ridge in Chickasaw County, Mississippi. It consists of six conical mounds and a surrounding village area of considerable extent. Five mounds were excavated and a large part of the village area. In the village the chief features of interest were seven circular house patterns marked by posthole patterns. The largest was seventy-eight feet in diameter. Potsherds were abundant and the mounds yielded some very interesting grave offerings.

The mounds were definitely burial mounds with extended burials in subfloor pits and on the base. Copper ear-spoons of the double cymbol type, sometimes filled with galena, were placed at the wrists instead of the normal placement at the ears. Burials in the village were flexed and without burial offerings. The bones were all badly decayed but a deformed Centralid came from the mounds, undeformed Sylvids from the village area. Centralids and Sylvids both were found in the historic Chickasaw burials on the site.

There was practically no stratigraphy present but by an exhaustive analysis the authors were able to work out the sequence of features that suggests a rather long period of occupation for the site. This leads to an amplification of Jennings pottery se-

quences. Cotter and Corbett strongly suggest that Saltillo Fabricmarked (sand-tempered) was earlier than Furrs Cordmarked. The pottery sequence begins with Baldwin Plain and Saltillo Fabricmarked followed by Furrs Cordmarked, in turn followed by the clay-tempered (Tishomingo) series of plain and cord-marked. Minor types present are limestone-tempered ware, Alexander series, and Marksville types. The limestone-tempered types are variously allocated to the post-sand-tempered times and to the sand-tempered series. Evidently their position is not at all clear. The Alexander series was dated as "during the mound erection period," as is also the Marksville pottery. This would indicate a later time for Alexander than is usually found in the area.

The dating of the mound seems quite satisfactory in relation to the pottery found and the chronology already established by Jennings. It is said to date early Miller I into Miller III. This is hard to reconcile with the suggestion given on page 2 that the site lasted only one or two hundred years. Miller I to Miller III is practically the whole span of Burial Mound I and II periods. It is hard to see how the marked developments of this period could have taken place in even two hundred years. The chart on page 33 gives the Bynum site a span of five to six hundred years. This seems much more reasonable. I suspect the seeming confusion here is due to the impending radiocarbon dates just when this was being published. Now the available evidence on dates can be applied to this site and will give a much better time span.

In the comparative section, Bynum is compared with Copena, Miller, Adena, Tchefuncte, Marksville, McQuorquodale, and Hamilton. The multiple comparison shows that Bynum is closest to Copena, which agrees well with the evidence presented. The comparison was such as to show the number of Bynum traits present in Copena, 46 out of 67, and the Copena traits present at Bynum, 28 out of 67. Certainly Bynum is to be regarded as a local variant of the more widespread Copena. I personally feel that a trait by trait comparison of sites is less productive than a discussion of relationships of complexes or even isolated traits. However, the material is presented in such detail that the reader is perfectly able to make any comparisons he wishes for himself. As Bynum's affiliation is explicitly stated to be with Copena

it is surprising to find in the summary that the site is equated with Burial Mound I. I am sure this must be a typographical error. All the evidence presented is that the site lasted during both Burial Mound I and II times. The ceramic analysis (pages 17-35) certainly confirms this view.

In spite of these minor criticisms there is much to recommend the report. It is certainly the most complete report on a Copena site in print and the most complete recent report on a recently excavated site in the southeast. It does much to fill out the picture of Copena. Its value lies in the fact that no matter how chronologies may change, the basic data are presented fairly and completely. The format and illustrations set a high standard that will be difficult to equal.

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